

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY DEMANDS ANSWERS ON LEAD IN BOSTON DRINKING WATER

Washington, DC: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Resources Committee, today sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requesting further information about lead levels in Boston drinking water. According to press reports, the Boston area drinking water exceeded the national standard of 15 parts per billion (ppb) of lead.

“Lead contamination is still a serious problem that threatens public health, especially that of babies and young children. Federal, state, and local regulators need to continue working with citizens to combat this threat,” said Rep. Markey. “Because of Washington, DC’s lead disaster, EPA is rightfully scrutinizing lead testing results from across the nation, and as a result, drinking water in some Boston area communities appears to be in violation of the national standard. We need to get to the bottom of the problem in order to continue Boston’s progress in cleaning up lead in drinking water. No mother should have to fear that the tap water used to prepare formula for her infant could cause any harm whatsoever.”

Rep. Markey will join other lawmakers in introducing legislation next week to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act. Highlights of the bill include:

- Review and revision of the current maximum contaminant level for lead in drinking water (15 ppb).
- Upon violation of the standard, increase the percentage of lead service line replacements to 10% per year until all the lines are replaced.
- Improve public notice and education on lead in drinking water.
- Require that tests are conducted every 6 months on a statistically relevant sample.
- Establish a lead service line replacement fund of \$200 million per year for 2005 to 2009.
- Redefine “lead free” plumbing fixtures as having 0.2% lead, as compared to the currently allowed 8% lead content, and make it illegal to install anything but lead free plumbing fixtures.

“It is time to improve the Safe Drinking Water Act to increase the frequency of water testing in homes, schools and day-care centers, to improve the notification procedures for residents with elevated lead levels, and to eliminate lead from plumbing products,” said Rep. Markey. “No child in America should be left behind because of lead pollution.”

In October 2002, Rep. Markey released a report on attempts by the Bush Administration to appoint industry-friendly representatives to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention.

The full report and further information can be found at www.house.gov/markey.

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